(c) and (d) While allowing FDI in activities mentioned in (a) & (b) above, since 2003[for (a) &(b) i. above] and 2002 [for (a) &(b) ii. above], it was felt that this would not lead to increase of agricultural prices.

Doubling the trade between India and Thailand

2728. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Thailand are exploring opportunities to double the annual trade to 4 billion dollar in the next couple of years, and expand the list of items that could be traded, from 82 to about 5,000;

(b) whether a working group from Thailand had discussions with the concerned officials here to double the trade volume from two billion dollar to four billion dollar; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) A Framework Agreement for establishing Free Trade Area (FTA) between India and Thailand was signed by the Commerce Ministers of India and Thailand on 9th October 2003. 82 common items of export interest to both the sides have been agreed for elimination of tariff on a fast track basis *w.e.f.* 1.9.2004. During the visit of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand in June 2005, the two Prime Ministers agreed to raise the level of the bilateral trade between India and Thailand to US $ 4 billion by 2007. During the visit of Thai Foreign Minister on August 7-8,2006, the Thai Foreign Minister reiterated this commitment and mentioned that present level of bilateral trade is US $ 2.7 billion and it should be possible to meet the target of US $ 4 billion by 2007 set by the two Prime Ministers.

Import of vanaspati from Sri Lanka

2729. SHRI PR. RAJAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether import of vanaspati from Sri Lanka is duty free under the Free Trade Agreement;